-- 10. (Amended) A camera according to claim 8, further comprising an electric component part placed between said front and rear chassis, said front and rear chassis being rendered conductive to electric ground. --.

-- 11. (Amended) A camera according to claim 1, further comprising a casing member on which an accessory mount portion on which an electronic flash and other accessories can be detachably mounted is fixed,

said casing member being supported by a reinforcing metal member mounted on at least one of said front and rear chassis. --.

REMARKS

This Preliminary Amendment and the accompanying Request for Continued Examination ("RCE") are being filed in response to the Office Action mailed September 27, 2002. A credit card form authorizing payment for the filing fee for filing the RCE is included with this Preliminary Amendment. If necessary, please charge any other fees for entry of this Preliminary Amendment and RCE to our Deposit Account No. 18-1644.

Claims 1-3 and 5-11 have been amended. Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by this Preliminary Amendment. This marked-up version is entitled "Attachment A - Marked Up Version Showing Changes Made to Claims."

The Examiner has objected to applicant's claim 6 for insufficient antecedent basis for the limitation "optical light beam." Claim 6 has been amended to recite an object light beam, for which applicant submits sufficient antecedent basis exists in claim 5, from which claim 6 depends.

The Examiner has rejected applicant's claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

as being anticipated by the Takada patent (U.S. Patent No. 6,359,652). The Examiner has rejected applicant's claims 3, 4, 8 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Takada patent. Claims 1 and 5-7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Furuya, et al. patent (U.S. Patent No. 5,828,919) taken in view of the Cronin, et al. patent (U.S. Patent No. 5,561,458). Claims 8-10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over the Takada patent in view of the Kikuchi patent (U.S. Patent No 5,697,005). Finally, claim 11 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Takada patent in view of the Omiya patent (U.S. Patent No. 6,058,274). With respect to applicant's claims, as amended, these rejections are respectfully traversed.

The invention is directed to a camera in which both a lens mount and an image taking device are commonly mounted onto a central main body. Applicant's claim 1 has been amended to clarify that a mirror unit is disposed between the lens mount and the image taking device. Typically, in a camera in which a mirror unit is disposed between the lens mount and the image taking device, attachment of the lens mount onto a front side member of the camera and of the image taking device onto a rear side member of the camera may be performed more easily than attachment of both a lens mount and an image taking device onto one specific common member. However, if the lens mount and the image taking device are respectively attached to different members, and a load is applied to the lens mount, the member to which the lens mount is attached is positionally deviated from the member to which the image taking device is attached, and the positional relationship between the lens mount and the image taking device may change.

In order to compensate for such positional deviation, in the present invention, although a mirror unit is located between the lens mount and the image taking device, the lens mount

and image taking device are commonly attached to one member, so that the positional relationship between the lens mount and image taking device is kept constant when load is applied to the lens mount and when the positional relationship between the front side and rear side member of the camera is changed. Such a construction is not taught or suggested by the cited art of record.

The cited Takada patent shows in Fig. 1 a camera in which a photographic element 102 is located in the vicinity of the lens cover mounting 109. However, the patent fails to teach or suggest a camera having a member disposed between the lens cover mounting 109 and the photographic element 102. It is believed that the lens cover mounting 109 and the photographic element 102 are mounted onto one member because no additional member such as a mirror unit is disposed between the element 102 and lens mounting 109. The camera shown in Fig. 5 similarly does not teach or suggest an additional member disposed between the lens holding unit 331 and photographic element 301.

By contrast, as discussed above, in the camera as claimed in the present invention, a mirror unit is located between the lens mount and the image taking device while the lens mount and image taking device are commonly attached to one member. Therefore, the basic structure of the camera as presently claimed is fundamentally different than the camera taught by the Takada patent. Applicant's amended claim 1, which recites such structure, and its respective dependent claims, thus patentably distinguish over the Takada patent.

With respect to the Examiner's rejection of claims 1 and 5-7 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Furuya, et al. patent in view of Cronin, et al. patent, in the camera of the present invention as claimed in amended claim 1, the image taking device is located between the front chassis and rear chassis so that the image taking device is guarded from

external impact loading on the camera. Such a structure is not taught or suggested by Furuya, et al. patent either alone or in combination with Cronin, et al. patent.

In the camera taught by the Furuya, et al. patent, a body plate 41 is mounted on a camera body 44 having a film transport path and imaging lens barrel 2, and the camera body 44 is fixed to the front cover 1 as shown in Figs. 5 and 9. As noted by the Examiner, the Furuya, et al. patent does not disclose an image taking device as presently claimed but instead teaches use of photographic film as an image taking device. The Cronin, et al. patent shows, in Fig. 2B, an electronic imaging module 20b, on which a housing 62 and CCD 28 are mounted so that photographic film in a conventional photographic camera can be replaced with electronic means such as a CCD. According to the Examiner, the module 20b is analogous to the camera body of the Furuya, et al. patent such that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to replace the camera body 44 of the Furuya et al. patent with the module 20b of Cronin et al. patent to convert a conventional photographic camera into an electronic imaging camera.

However, even assuming, arguendo, that this modification of the Furuya, et al. camera could be made, the elements behind the module in the Furuya, et al. camera define a second camera body 54, which is protected from external shock only by a rear outer cover 4 as shown in FIG. 8 of the Furuya, et al. patent. The Furuya, et al patent, moreover, teaches that the outer covers of the Furuya, et al camera can deform due to external shock or force (See Col. 6, lines 57-62, of the Furuya, et al. patent). Accordingly, the modified Furuya, et al. camera would still not include front and rear chassis as presently claimed, i.e., members having sufficient strength to protect from external impact.

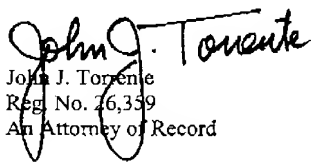
Applicant's amended claim 1, and its dependent claims, all of which recite such features, thus patentably distinguish over the Furuya, et al. patent, alone or in combination with the Cronin, et al. patent. The other patents cited by the Examiner, i.e., the Kikuchi and Omiya patents, add nothing to Furuya, et al. and Cronin, et al. patents to change this conclusion.

In view of the above, it is submitted that applicant's claims, as amended, patentably distinguish over the cited art of record. Accordingly, reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes that an interview would expedite consideration of this Preliminary Amendment or of the application, a request is made that the Examiner telephone applicant's counsel at (212) 682-9640.

Dated: December 11, 2002

Respectfully submitted,



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B422-162

ATTACHMENT A- Marked Up Version Showing Changes Made to the Claims

IN THE CLAIMS

Amend claims 1-3 as follows:

-- 1. (Twice Amended) A camera comprising:

a front chassis which forms a front portion of a main body of said camera;

a rear chassis which forms a rear portion of the main body of said camera and is coupled to said front chassis;

a lens mount;

an image taking device designed to photoelectrically convert light received and being disposed between said front chassis and said rear chassis;

[a front main body member which forms a front portion of a main body of said camera;

a rear main body member which forms a rear portion of the main body of said camera and is coupled to said front main body member; and]

a mirror unit disposed between said lens mount and said image taking device; and

a central main body member on which said lens mount and said image taking device are mounted and which is coupled to at least one of said front and rear [main body members] chassis --.

-- 2. (Amended) A camera according to claim 1, wherein said central main body member is fixed to only said front [main body member] chassis of said front and rear [main body members] chassis. --.

-- 3. (Amended) A camera according to claim 1, further comprising coupling members for coupling said front and rear [main body members] chassis to each other. --.

Amend claims 5-11 as follows:

-- 5. (Twice Amended) A camera according to claim 1, further comprising:

a finder optical device mounted on said central main body member; [and

a] wherein said mirror unit [which is mounted on said central main body member and] reflects an object light beam and guides the object light beam to said finder optical system. --.

-- 6. (Twice Amended) A camera according to claim 5, wherein said finder optical device includes a focal plate serving as an imaging plane for the [optical] object light beam reflected by said mirror unit. --.

-- 7. (Twice Amended) A camera according to claim 5, further comprising a focus detection device which is mounted on said central main body member and performs focus detection by using [an optical] the object light beam from said mirror unit. --.

-- 8. (Amended) A camera according to claim 1, wherein said front and rear [main body members] chassis comprise metal parts. --.

-- 9. (Amended) A camera according to claim 8, wherein said front and rear [main body members] chassis are formed by pressing. --.

-- 10. (Amended) A camera according to claim 8, further comprising an electric component part placed between said front and rear [main body members] chassis, said front and rear [main body members] chassis being rendered conductive to electric ground. --.

-- 11. (Amended) A camera according to claim 1, further comprising a casing member on which an accessory mount portion on which an electronic flash and other accessories can be detachably mounted is fixed,

said casing member being supported by a reinforcing metal member mounted on at least one of said front and rear [main body members] chassis. --.